

## COMMUTER CHALLENGE RESULTS GREAT JOB, BLOOMINGTON EMPLOYEES AND BUSINESSES!

THEY CARPOOLED, RODE THE BUS, BICYCLED and walked to work – 2,665 Bloomington commuters made the pledge to try an alternative to driving alone during the 2006 Commuter Challenge. More than 10,500 metro-area individuals and 300 employers participated in the challenge. Based on Bloomington pledges alone, the Commuter Challenge led to a decrease of almost 192,000 miles of travel. Great job, Bloomington residents, workers and businesses!



For the last 10 years, resident Tim Wuennecke, *photo left*, has biked to work three to four times a week, six months out of the year. Wuennecke, whose employer Supervalu in Eden Prairie provides showers and bike racks for bicycle commuters, said, “I love that I can exercise and get to work at the same time.” Wuennecke won a box suite at a Twins game .



Mayor Winstead, second from the left, accepts Commuter Challenge award.

Last March, the I-494 Corridor Commission challenged its six member cities to see which city could achieve the highest number of people who pledged to bicycle to work during the Commuter Challenge. With 463 commuters making the pledge, Bloomington rode away with the first-place award for achievement in bicycle commuting. Bloomington residents and workers accounted for 25 percent of all Commuter Challenge pledges. The I-494 Corridor Commission’s Executive Director Melissa Madison, along with Jim Sorensen, co-founder of Two Wheels to Town, and Pat Sorensen, President of Penn Cycle, presented Bloomington’s award to Mayor Gene Winstead at an October Council meeting. *See photo left.*

## EARTH ACTION HERO BIODIESEL MAN

***Earth Action Heroes protect the earth. Whether it’s saving energy or guarding Bloomington’s natural resources, these individuals are making a difference. Here are your neighbors in action ...***

IN KEEPING OUR AIR CLEAN AND TRYING to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, Bloomington resident Michael Weber is doing his part. Last spring, Weber bought a used Volkswagen diesel and began running his car on close to 100 percent biodiesel, a fuel derived from processed oil most commonly from soybeans.

“It’s a great change and the fuel is made and produced by Minnesota farmers,” Weber said. “CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are reduced, which lowers greenhouse gas emissions by 78 percent.”

According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), using alternative fuels such as electricity, ethanol and biodiesel in vehicles can generally reduce harmful pollutants and exhaust emissions. In

addition, the DOE says that most of these fuels can be produced domestically and derived from renewable sources.

Like other alternative fuel options, there are downsides to biodiesel. Fuel and chemicals are used to harvest soybeans and, at this time, there is limited fuel availability. Weber knows of only two gas stations near Bloomington that sell biodiesel, but is hopeful that more are coming online. However, Weber notes that there is some versatility to using the alternative fuel.

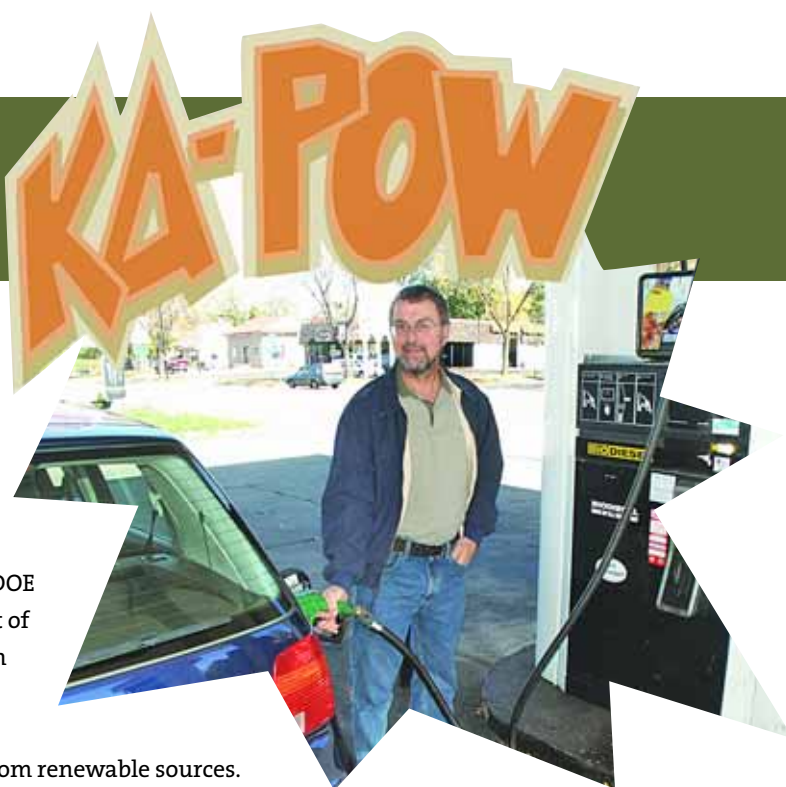
“I didn’t have to convert or alter my engine at all,” Weber said. “If I can’t find a gas station that offers biodiesel, my car will run on regular diesel.”

According to Weber, one of the biggest advantages of choosing diesel is fuel economy. Though the cost of biodiesel may be a little more than traditional diesel, Weber estimates that he saves \$125 to \$150 per month in fuel costs. He gets around 44 miles per gallon (mpg) in the city and 55 mpg on the highway.

“This past summer, I took a trip to New York City and I only had to stop and fill up twice,” Weber said. “I drove 770 miles on one tank of fuel.”



Weber averages 44 miles per gallon in the city using biodiesel fuel.



As part of a cleaner air incentive, the 2005 Minnesota Legislature mandated that all diesel fuel sold or offered for sale in the state must contain at least two percent biodiesel fuel by volume. Hennepin County started using a 5 percent blend of biodiesel fuel in 2003. Experts agree that blends of up to 5 percent are safe for vehicle engines. However, if you are considering using 100 percent biodiesel, check with your vehicle’s manufacturer to ensure that you don’t void the manufacturer’s warranty.



### UPCOMING TREE SALE

To increase the number of trees on residential properties, the City holds a tree sale each spring. In 2006, approximately 180 trees were sold. The City also plants trees in parks and other public areas to ensure that Bloomington’s urban forest continues to be one of the community’s many treasures. Look for the tree order form in the February *Briefing*. For more information, call Paul Edwardson at 952-563-8762.



## GO-TO COLLEGE PASS NORMANDALE STUDENTS ON BOARD WITH MASS TRANSIT

METRO TRANSIT IMPLEMENTED A reduced-cost transit pass test program this fall for students at 11 metropolitan area colleges. During the first month, Normandale Community College students purchased 219 Go-To College passes (45 percent of the total passes sold at the 11 colleges) and were responsible for more than half of all the resulting transit ridership.

“The transit use incentive has been well received at Normandale and participation at this level will help strengthen the long-term viability of Bloomington’s transit routes,” said Community Development Director Larry Lee. “This is also an example of good work by the I-494 Corridor Commission for its role in getting this program extended to the school during the first year.”

## IT’S COLD OUTSIDE PROTECT YOUR TREES

FRIGID TEMPERATURES, ICY WINDS AND snow can cause major stress for trees. Help your trees through the cold months and you



will be rewarded in the spring.

- Put a blanket of mulch around the base of your tree to help retain water and protect the tree’s roots.
- If temperatures permit, an occasional watering during the winter on young trees can be a lifesaver. Water only when soil and trees are cool but not frozen.
- Prune. Winter is one of the best times to prune because it is easier to see the structure of trees without their leaves. Limit pruning to dead wood and poorly placed branches.
- Prevent mechanical injuries. Branch breakage or splitting can be caused by ice and snow accumulation, or chewing and rubbing by animals. Wrap the base of young trees in a hard, plastic guard or a metal hardware cloth. Remember to remove the wraps and guards in the spring to prevent damage when the tree begins to grow.

*Source: The International Society of Arboriculture.*